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of the great curiosities of Nebraska state government." It then says: if there were ever a time when state agencies needed to make the maximum effort to achieve efficiency in spending, it is now. It goes on: One way or another, officials in the executive and legislative branches need to step up and straighten out the muddle over these state contracts. I passed out a copy of that editorial in the Omaha World-Herald for you to see. I tend to agree with what they did put into the editorial. One billion dollars. That's what we're talking about. Approximately \$1 billion every year is spent on these private service contracts. That's...well, that's even more than state senators make. It's more than we spend on prisons annually. We spend it each year. And it too is growing. It's an issue that I think does require attention, and that's why I've devoted time to it. Another handout that you have before you has LB 626 time line on it. It goes through a list, starting back when Senator Warner was here, and some of the legislation that he introduced, some of which was passed and some of which wasn't, to deal with how we contract out, or what we do with these private contracts. It goes to even 1995 then, when the then Appropriations Committee introduced an interim study resolution to look at it; continues on through some of the findings that my staff put together. We were...they were able to identify almost two-thirds of \$1 billion in contract spending that we could locate. And considering we didn't have all the information, we know that at least that amount was spent in fiscal year '96 and '97, again pointing out the size and the work that's been done. I introduced some legislation in '99 for a moratorium, and that was more of an attention-getter, and then an interim study that was put together. And a copy of that interim study is right here. It's probably an inch and a half thick. But it doesn't even include the contracts, or a lot of other information. But if anybody is interested in seeing that, it's certainly available. Then, following that interim study, Governor Johanns did do an Executive Order, and I appreciate the fact that he did that, not long after he came into office. Then, in 2000, just last year, we were able to put in the budget bill intent language that requested...and it is just intent language...that we put all of the information on these contracts in a centralized location, so we could at least see what they are, so we could at least know what these contracts were. That intent